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Children's Water Festival Finds Fun Ways to Teach Students About Precious Resource

(Santa Fe, NM) —Why is water so important to life? What is a watershed and how does it function? These big water questions and more will be answered at the second annual Children's Water Festival to be held at the **Sweeney Convention Center in Santa Fe on February 18th and 19th from 9 am to 1:00 pm**. Participants will include 550 students from schools in the Santa Fe area. As they step off the buses, the Water Wizard will again welcome the 4th graders. They will spend the rest of the day participating in fun, hands-on learning activities about water science, history, geography, and our water future.

"Ensuring that there will be a sufficient supplies of clean, safe drinking water for these kids is one of the most important jobs that we do," said New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Secretary Ron Curry. "I'm proud to be a part of this fair and to help educate tomorrow's water leaders."

The Water Festival features 12 activities that are presented five times daily for different groups of students. These include discovering what it's like to be a Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout and learning how to determine the purity of a stream by identifying which "bugs" live there. Teams of students also work together to negotiate water-sharing agreements in a drought while others learn how native vegetation along the river's edge keeps the water cleaner.

"As we look to the future, even tougher decisions must be made about water and we'll need decision makers who really understand this scarce and precious resource," said Festival Manager Susan Gorman. "Those future decision makers are the students of today, our children. We need to make sure that they have the water facts, concepts and critical thinking skills they will need."

Major donors to the Water Festival include NMED, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the City of Santa Fe. Additional funding has been provided by PNM, the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter, Santa Fe Area Home Builders Association and other businesses.

For more information, contact Festival Manager Susan Gorman at (505) 259-7190, or Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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